

Deuteronomy 15 - Thursday, September 8th, 2011

- (1) "At the end of *every* seven years you shall grant a release of debts. (2) And this *is* the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent *anything* to his neighbor shall release *it*; he shall not require *it* of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release.
- Moses is describing the sabbatical year, every seventh year, when for that year, a release of debts was granted in that payment wasn't required.
 - The thought is that the debts that were owed were not completely cancelled because that took place every fiftieth year, in the year of Jubilee.
 - Another thought is that this would have promoted the idea of short term loans and would "protect" the children of Israel from financial problems.
- Also, notice that it's to be called "the Lord's release." Why? I believe it's so they would have a built in protection from greed and materialism.
- In other words, if the Lord releases the debtor, then so too does He release the creditor from the exorbitant profit he would make on the interest.
- Perhaps it goes without saying, but if we operated under this principle today, we would most certainly not have such a thing as a national debt.



<http://www.usdebtclock.org/>

- (3) Of a foreigner you may require *it*; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, (4) except when there may be no poor among you; for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance— (5) only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today.
- This was God's economic policy as it relates to poverty. If they were obedient to that which God had commanded, they were blessed financially.
 - Conversely, if they disobeyed God's economic principles then they would tie the hands of God's blessing, with the ropes of their disobedience.
 - Sadly, and we'll see this in verse 11, they would always have "the poor among them," because of their disobedience to this command from God.
- What's interesting about this is that obedience to this command had to propensity to completely eliminate all poverty by virtue of the economics.
- One commentator suggested that following God's economic plan for them as a nation, would have eradicated all poverty from their society.
- How can that be? The tithe for the poor every third year, a release from debts every seventh year, and a cancellation of debts every fiftieth year.
- (6) For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.
- God is declaring and promising that their obedience to this principle would be met with their prosperity as a nation even over all other nations.
 - So much so that they would be the lender and not the borrower. God would prosper them so greatly that no other nation would rule over them.
 - This is one of those principles that you cannot break. If you go up against it, it breaks you. We see this principle in the book of Proverbs 22:7.

Proverbs 22:7 NIV The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

(7) "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, (8) but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. (9) Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. (10) You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it's a sobering reminder of how God knows and sees our wicked hearts.
- In other words, God knows us so well, knowing the motives of our heart are so evil, that He has to remind us that He knows what were thinking.
- Namely, when year six rolls around and the borrower or the poor comes around, we shouldn't withhold from them knowing year seven is next.

- Another reason that this is so interesting is because it speaks to God's love for the poor! If the truth be known, this principle defies all logic.
- Just as tithing to the Lord, and alms to the poor make no sense practically, God is saying that in His economy $X\% - Y\% = \text{more of a percent!}$
- It's been said that one can never out give God because He has a bigger shovel, not that we give to get, it's that when we give to Him, we get it.

Matthew 25:34-40 NIV "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. (35) For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, (36) I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' (37) "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? (38) When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? (39) When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' (40) "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

(11) For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.' (12) "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. (13) And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; (14) you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. *From what* the LORD has blessed you with, you shall give to him. (15) You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today.

- God's love for the poor and the slave, as we'll see shortly, now comes into a sharper focus here as God commands that they give to them freely.
- The slave that's spoken of here carries with it the idea of someone getting them self into so much debt, they were sold into slavery to pay it off.
- Then, according to God's command, when that slave was set free in the seventh year, the master was not to send him away empty-handed.

(16) And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you, (17) then you shall take an awl and thrust *it* through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. (18) It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

- Now God will deal with a situation where the slave, in that seventh year, chooses to stay, and not be sent away, because he loves his master.
- The master was to take an awl, which was a long pointed spike, and "split open," the slaves ear, as a mark that he was his servant forever.
- If this is sounding a little familiar, it's because it should sound a little familiar. Specifically as it speaks to and points to the person of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 50:5-6 NKJV The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away. (6) I gave My back to those who struck *Me*, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

Psalms 40:6-8 NIV Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. (7) Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. (8) I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

- We see this same principle of a bond-slave echoed by the Apostle Paul when in the New Testament he refers to himself as "bearing the marks."

Galatians 6:16-17 NIV Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. (17) Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

Romans 1:1 NKJV Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

(19) "All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the LORD your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. (20) You and your household shall eat *it* before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses. (21) But if there is a defect in it, *if it is* lame or blind *or has* any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. (22) You may eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean *person* alike *may eat it*, as *if it were* a gazelle or a deer. (23) Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

- Deuteronomy chapter fifteen ends with the setting apart of the firstborn without any defect or blemish so as to eat of it before the Lord their God.
- Clearly, this not only pictures the person of Jesus Christ, but the finished work on the cross by the person of Jesus Christ, whom we partake of.
- We partake of communion and eat the bread, a symbol of His body broken for us, and drink from the cup, a symbol of His bloodshed for us.